EDITORIAL

A CONTRIBUTION TO ACADEMIC RESEARCH: THE ROLE OF SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Conventional learning, based on logical-deductive concepts such as “two plus two equals four” and “if we add a third line to two parallel lines, parallelism is maintained,” has its value. However, as Spinoza (1632–1677) taught us many centuries ago in his “Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect,” memorized technical knowledge alone is insufficient.

The aforementioned philosopher argued that the true challenge for knowledge and personal fulfillment lies in exploring and deducing new agreements, as well as equipping individuals with tools to understand differences and oppositions in order to express themselves critically.

Indeed, it is this quality that makes a difference and distinguishes reflective thinking from a mere collection of opinions and uniqueness from conformity, raising the bar to exceptional levels.

Therefore, this leads us to recognize the need for a deep understanding of the essence of things and to highlight the role of universities as sites of academic excellence. Currently, in the context of globalized economies and the knowledge era of the 21st century, there is significant discussion about the need to transform conventional universities into dynamic centers of research, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

According to a study conducted by the World Bank, The road to academic excellence: the making of world-class research universities, the factors that support this excellence are: i) governance with a strategic vision and a favorable attitude toward innovation, development, and flexibility, to the point where institutions are able to make decisions and manage their resources adequately without being hindered by bureaucracy; ii) a high concentration of talent, including professors, researchers, and students, without forgetting the technical personnel; and iii) abundant resources to provide an environment of world-class learning and to facilitate advanced research.

With this vision in mind, we have established OSEAN—Outermost Regions Sustainable Ecosystem for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and now JER—Journal of Entrepreneurial Researchers. In other words, we aim to contribute, at a micro level, to the development of a dynamic hub based on a transnational network of exceptional colleagues, fostering the development and dissemination of advanced research of international reference with a high impact on society.

In practical terms, we focus on the development of research lines aligned with the problems facing contemporary societies and their respective solutions, such as:

a) Green and blue economy

The literature on the green and blue economy emphasizes the importance of sustainable resource management and highlights the potential for economic growth through environmentally friendly practices. Scholars have explored various aspects, including the adoption of renewable energies, sustainable tourism, assessment of ecosystem services, and circular economy models. Research results have shown that adopting green and blue economy practices can lead to job creation, increased competitiveness, and greater resilience to environmental risks, making ecosystems more resilient.
“The green economy is defined as an economy that results in improved human well-being and social equity while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.”—UN Environment Programme, Green Economy Report 2019

b) Eco-entrepreneurship

In the field of eco-entrepreneurship, researchers have been examining the motivations, challenges, and strategies of entrepreneurs involved in sustainable businesses. The literature has observed the identification and exploration of ecological market opportunities, the role of knowledge and environmental networks in business success, and the influence of ecological labeling and branding on consumer behavior. Studies have also demonstrated the impact of policy frameworks, incubation programs, and networks in promoting eco-entrepreneurship ecosystems.

“Sustainable entrepreneurship involves the discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities to create goods and services that allow all stakeholders to flourish in the short and long term.”—Schaltegger and Wagner, Sustainable Entrepreneurship: A Practice-Oriented Approach

c) Green accounting

The literature on ecological accounting has focused on the development of frameworks and methodologies for integrating environmental factors into financial reporting. Researchers have explored environmental management accounting practices, carbon accounting, and the measurement of eco-efficiency. The literature has also addressed the role of green accounting in business decision-making, sustainability reporting, and the assessment of intangible environmental assets. The research has underlined the need for standardized ecological accounting practices to facilitate comparability and transparency.

“Through sustainability accounting and reporting, organizations can better understand their ecological footprint, identify opportunities for resource efficiency, and communicate their commitment to sustainable practices to stakeholders.”—Schaltegger, Bennett, and Burritt, Sustainability Accounting and Reporting: Fad or Trend?

d) Sustainable finance

The literature on sustainable finance reflects on the integration of ESG factors in investment decision-making processes. Researchers have analyzed the financial performance of sustainable investments, the role of responsible investment, and the impact of ESG disclosure on stock prices. The literature has also explored sustainable financial products and instruments such as green bonds, social impact bonds, and sustainability-linked loans. Scholars have called for strengthened regulation, disclosure frameworks, and investor education to promote sustainable financial practices.

“Sustainable finance integrates environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations into investment decision-making, enabling investors to contribute to long-term value creation while addressing sustainability challenges.”—Clark, Feiner, and Viehs, The Handbook of Sustainable Finance.

e) Digital innovation

The literature on digital innovation has highlighted the transformative potential of technologies in addressing sustainability challenges. Research has explored the application of AI, IoT, blockchain, and data analytics in domains such as energy management, supply chain transparency, smart cities, and environmental monitoring. Scholars have examined barriers and facilitators of digital innovation adoption, ethical implications of technology-driven sustainability solutions, and the role of digital platforms in facilitating sustainable entrepreneurship and collaboration.
“Digital innovation presents unprecedented opportunities to develop scalable and efficient solutions for sustainability challenges, harnessing the power of emerging technologies to drive positive environmental and social impact.” — Geissdoerfer, Vladimirova, and Evans, Sustainable Business Model Innovation: A Review.

f) Sustainability

The literature on sustainability covers various dimensions, including sustainable development, circular economy, energy transition, climate change, and biodiversity conservation. Researchers have explored the systemic nature of sustainability challenges and the need for integrated approaches that consider economic, social, and environmental aspects. The literature addresses topics such as sustainability indicators, governance mechanisms, stakeholder participation, and sustainable consumption and production patterns. Scholars regularly emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary research and the role of entrepreneurship in promoting sustainable innovation.

“Sustainability involves meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, integrating economic, social, and environmental dimensions to create a more equitable and resilient world.” — World Commission on Environment and Development, Our Common Future (Brundtland Report).

g) Social inclusion

In the context of social inclusion, the literature has focused on the role of businesses in promoting diversity, equity, and social well-being. Scholars continue to examine the impact of inclusive entrepreneurship programs, social entrepreneurship, and corporate social responsibility initiatives on marginalized communities. The literature addresses topics such as inclusive business models, access to financing for underrepresented groups, and the influence of social inclusion on sustainable development. Research highlights the need for policies and interventions that create an enabling environment for social inclusion in business activities.

“Social entrepreneurship seeks to create sustainable social value, addressing social disparities and promoting inclusion by engaging marginalized communities, fostering partnerships, and driving positive social change.” — Mair and Marti, Social Entrepreneurship Research: A Source of Explanation, Prediction, and Delight.

As evident from the above framework, the changes are disruptive and require us to be fully open to a change in our actions, envisioning the new paradigms.

In fact, as we recently wrote in Pátria — Jornal da Comunidade Científica de Língua Portuguesa, regarding the release of the World Economic Forum’s 2023 report on future professions, it is crucial to act quickly due to the gap between educational offerings and the actual needs of the market, given that the professions of the present and the future demand new remarkable skills and proactivity from us.

It is in this context of change, risks, but also great opportunities, that this new editorial proposal we call Journal of Entrepreneurial Researchers arises. It is a “no walls” space for reflection and discussion, aimed at developing critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, empathy, and a clear focus on the use of emerging technologies.

In advance, I would like to thank my colleagues for unreservedly accepting my invitation to found this journal, which encourages us to engage in profound reflection and to surpass the norm, in the hope of contributing to a significantly better, more inclusive, and sustainable world.

With that being said, I would like for this editorial to be just the beginning of a continuous journey of discoveries and learning, and I would like to wish my dear colleagues much success in their research and future projects, sincerely hoping that our paths continue to cross, further strengthening the bonds of friendship we have formed over time.
Thank you ever so much for being part of this initiative. Together, we will build something truly meaningful and lasting.

REFERENCES

Altbach, P. G., & Salmi, J. (Eds.). (No Date). The road to academic excellence: the making of world-class research universities (Directions in development). World Bank.


